Much research has been on the adolescent brain in recent years.

During the teen years, the brain does not grow in size, but it changes. Between age 16 and 20:

* the brain develops so that the adolescents are more able to control what they do;
* this brain development allows adolescents to gain better control over their emotions;
* the brain develops so that adolescents become better at planning and understanding abstract concepts, like philosophy.

Adolescents can make choices that will affect their brain development.

* When a teenager concentrates on math, music, sports, or other activities that require thinking, new circuits can form in the brain.
* When a teenager chooses passive, non-thinking activities and just "hangs out" or watches a lot of television, the brain will make circuits for this kind of activity.

So, adolescents' decisions about how to make their brains "work" will affect the way their brain develops. To carry out the work of the brain, during adolescence and throughout life, one needs a good supply of oxygen (from exercise) and protein (from food). By improving cardiovascular health, one can increase the flow of oxygen-rich blood to the brain. This has been shown to improve brain function.

Sources:

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